

Dear Reader,

I am unsure whether this is the right place for my comment, but it seemed the most logical. If I am in error, I apologize in advance.

My comments are related to a Bloomberg article released August 29th, 2012 concerning the almost certain encryption of basic cable services by Comcast and other providers under the guise of "going green" and preventing theft. While I fully understand these companies having a desire to curb theft and decrease their carbon footprint, I just feel as a consumer more and more dumped on. As a household that until this year has been very happy receiving and paying for my basic cable through Comcast, I am now truly exhausted with increasing prices and decreasing service. I have watched my bill go up \$5 in 3 years. And now with this I am sure once it is encrypted we will be paying even more for the same thing you can get with an over the air antenna for free. I seem to remember when the FCC and all these providers were running around proclaiming how glorious the digital conversion was going to be, how we would be getting far superior quality with lower costs because digital was ever so much efficient than analog. Boy was that a load of poo. Prices go up and up, we get less and less. My parents live in the foothills of Northern California and now have no access to any antenna service whatsoever because of course digital can only travel in a straight line and I guess no one could put together that the earth hasn't been considered flat for maybe, what, 600 years? Unless you are Amish of course. So now they are forced to pay frankly ridiculous pricing and having yet more equipment to get basic local stations. And the whole HD thing is ludicrous. You go through all these campaigns to educate people, prices come down on HD televisions to the point I really don't know anyone who owns a tube TV anymore, yet after all the hoopla about how this was the future and analog was going away, we still have to pay extra for HD. Why? If HD is to be the industry standard and you have lead people to believe that as a fact, and in reliance of that statement of what purported to be fact, we the consumer made purchase of equipment to meet this so-called "standard" and now discover that HD is not standard, but a perk and as such costs more, that I believe is a gross breach of trust to the American consumer at large. If I had known that HD was going to be a luxury, I could have kept my old perfectly sound TV, got the downgraded signal and never bothered knowing the difference. Now I have wasted money on equipment I obviously didn't need because I can't utilize the capabilities of my new equipment because I don't want to pay extra for something that was touted by all including the FCC as the new "standard". It's not like I want the moon. I want to pay a fair price for a product that I could get for free with an antenna in my area, but I don't want the antenna. So I'm willing to pay, but \$30 a month for 12 stations? At that rate, an antenna gets much more attractive and pays for itself in 10 months. And the fee that kicks it over is the \$10 HD surcharge. Really? Don't get me wrong; my husband and I are relatively well off middle class. But these days I feel under assault by most businesses. Everyone is trying to push cost off on the consumer, and 10 dollars may not seem like much, but when it's 10 from this utility, 15 from that bank and 5 from this store after awhile it adds up. I find it a constant fight everyday to ensure that we aren't getting overcharged, overtaxed, and overpriced. I consider myself reasonably educated and some days it's hard to keep up with how

many ways companies try to get in your pocket. If things keep as they are I really do fear that we will be winnowed out, because it is inevitable that middle class people cannot continue on like this, continually making less while being charged more and more for every intimate detail of life. If my husband and I want to be on the have side of have and have not when all this is over, we will be hanging on by our toenails. So you can see I really don't see how that type of a charge is even fair or just for something that has been pushed as the new standard.

As for the argument of removing vehicles from the road because they will no longer have to send techs, you are smart enough to realize that all they are doing is shifting the driving to the consumer and thus making no environmental change whatsoever, right? You really can't be silly enough to believe that there will be any environmental impact whatsoever, right? This is a topic I can broach with some clarity, as my husband and I have been active in the arena of alternative fuel for 15-20 years. Sure they won't send techs to disconnect service anymore. But the tech was also picking up all the equipment and we all know we have more equipment these days, not less. So mailing it will help some, but we all know Comcast isn't going to pay shipping. The consumer will. So the consumer can either pay 10-20 dollars to ship because if the consumer is smart they will be insuring and tracking that package up the wazoo, or he can get in his car and drive it to the local office and get a handwritten receipt that the equipment was returned in good condition. Most people with that choice will drive the junk in. I know I will and I live 10 miles from the nearest office. Of course no one cares about the elderly or disabled who are unable to drive it in, but helping Comcast lower their carbon footprint thereby gaining them credits with the federal government is FAR more important than any new hassles you give to anyone else.

I swear I don't know why I'm bothering with this. I feel like the dodo would have felt had it had a brain and a voice to ask its slayers why they were killing it. In the end there are 310 million people in this country and I feel they matter much less than the 43 billion dollars that Comcast is worth. I don't know if this will make someone ponder a little before they give us over to the wolves, but I'd like to think that someone would consider that if they are going to permanently encrypt basic, could you at least make HD mandatory and control the price a little. People need a cheap affordable option for basic. Unless of course you have finally crossed the divide and consider television itself a luxury. In which case mankind has lived without television for centuries and some of us will have to learn to do so again.

Thank you for your time in reading my rant.